

Stand for Africa

The Kuwait-America Foundation joins the fight against Malaria

BY RIMA AL-SABAH, GALA FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN

Malaria is a disease of incredible contradiction. It is an ancient illness with a grip on the modern world. One tiny mosquito bite can transmit the disease, and huge populations are vulnerable, especially mothers and children. About a million people die from malaria each year; by December 31, 2008, a population the size of Baltimore, Md. will have disappeared from the earth due to this disease.

This preventable and treatable illness costs Africa billions of dollars in healthcare and lost productivity each year. The loss cripples families, health systems, and entire economies, but it could be controlled – possibly eradicated – in sub-Saharan Africa with an investment of \$2 billion a year over the next five years.

The malaria crisis is not about numbers or dollars. It's about husbands, wives, and children who need a reason to hope for the future.

Fortunately, a non-profit organization called Malaria No More understands today's challenges and cares very much about tomorrow's potential.

John Bridgeland, vice-chairman of Malaria No More, recently told me about a tremendous opportunity to help. His organization and an alliance of public and private partners have launched an ambitious plan to eradicate malaria across 30 countries ... in *three to five* years.

The plan is twofold: raising public awareness in the U.S. and putting help on the ground in Africa with insecticide-treated mosquito nets for beds, medicines, vaccines, and human resources.

One \$10 donation provides a life-saving bed net for a family – delivered as part of a comprehensive approach to controlling malaria through education, prevention, and treatment. An investment of \$1.5 million could save 150,000 lives. The return on this investment is greater than lives filled with hope – it is an unprecedented



Clockwise: Honored guest First Lady Laura Bush with Rima Al-Sabah (Photo: Kyle Samperton); honored guest Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice; Malaria No More vice-chairman John Bridgeland; and Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour, who will perform at the dinner.

opportunity for liberty and prosperity to take hold in an important part of the world.

Ambassador **Salem Al-Sabah** and I were inspired by this news, and we wanted to help. Along with the Kuwait-America Foundation, we decided to make Malaria No More the beneficiary of our fourth annual gala dinner, "Stand for Africa," which will be held on March 12 at our residence in Washington. To date, the foundation has raised more than \$1.5 million for the cause.

First Lady **Laura Bush** and Secretary of State **Condoleezza Rice** will be the honored guests at the gala; legendary Grammy award-winning Senegalese artist **Youssou N'Dour** will perform; and PBS's **Charlie Rose** will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

Soon, Malaria No More will lead the international health community in a 36-month

plan to expand malaria control in Africa. This approach will combine the best practices of public health with the best ideas from the private sector. With the support of partners such as the Kuwait-America Foundation, this effort could save 3.5 million lives and increase annual economic output by as much as \$30 billion in Africa over the next five years.

My husband and I take great pride in working with Malaria No More, and advancing the promise of a malaria-free world. We envision a hopeful future; a future in which the children of Africa will no longer be condemned to illness or death from this disease, but will live to develop their own potential and make their own contributions to society. With continued support, *together we can make malaria no more.* **WNL**